

THE GW HATCHET

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Serving The George Washington University Community Since 1904

Monday, July 10, 1995



photo by Dave Flintzen

Celebrating America's birthday: More than 400,000 people gathered on The Mall July 4 to watch a spectacular fireworks display.

ARAMark will provide food services for GW

BY JARED SHER
EDITOR IN CHIEF

ARAMark, Inc. has signed an interim agreement to provide GW with dining services in the wake of ServiceMaster's departure June 30.

The new firm, which also provides service to Baltimore's Oriole Park at Camden Yards, began operations July 1 and is helping the University with the transition. GW and ServiceMaster parted amicably after reaching an agreement to break their five-year contract, said Al Ingle, GW's associate vice president for business affairs.

ARAMark will not be responsible for picking up the remaining cost of last year's construction of J Street, since it was in ServiceMaster's contract to pay for the facility. GW and ServiceMaster worked out how the rest of the cost will be covered in the parting agreement, Ingle said.

The interim agreement will be in place for no more than 90 days. Under the arrangement, GW will pay all expenses and receive all revenue generated by food service. ARAMark will receive a flat management fee. Ingle added that negotiations for a long term agreement are underway.

Ingle said ARAMark was one of the finalists considered for the contract two years ago when ServiceMaster was originally chosen. He cited the firm's nationwide operations and experience as evidence that it is "top of the line as far as food service in higher education."

"We're very, very confident that they'll provide top-quality food service at a reasonable price," Ingle said. There are no indications that prices will rise with the new firm, he added.

Nancy Haaga, GW's director for auxiliary and institutional services, has also chaired the transition team.

"We're very fortunate we had ARAMark on board," Haaga said. "They have a wealth of experience to bring to GW. We're going to try and keep it as customized as we can. We are anticipating that things are only going to continue to improve."

She said the University and ARAMark are discussing possible renovations to J Street to improve services. Potential changes include a vegetarian station in place of Bernie's Tex-Mex.

GW drops plans to recruit NY basketball star amidst pressure

BY JIM GERAGHTY
SPORTS EDITOR

GW administrators notified Richie Parker last week that his candidacy for admission would no longer be considered, stating that GW's "tradition of confidentiality" and "unbalanced publicity" made it impossible for them to consider Parker in an objective manner.

Parker, a high school basketball phenom who pleaded guilty in January to felony sexual abuse of a female student at Manhattan Center for Mathematics and Science, has been in the center of a firestorm of intense scrutiny from the media since he visited GW in May.

On June 15, GW offered a \$100,000 scholarship to Parker's victim, prompting another wave of criticism. Parker's victim is a junior in high school. The University said the offer of a scholarship to Parker's victim stands, provided she maintains the academic performance necessary for admission to GW.

GW's Vice President for Student and Academic Support Services Robert Chernak said the media has had the story wrong from the start.

"It was really Richie Parker recruiting GW, not GW recruiting Richie Parker," Chernak said. "It's a

matter of complex semantics. The terminology within NCAA protocol will only permit GW to confirm 'we are recruiting.' Richie Parker never got to the point of being considered for admission."

He also said men's basketball head coach Mike Jarvis has never seen Parker play basketball.

According to a GW statement, the University's basketball office was first contacted by Parker's Amateur Athletic Union coach in January of this year to determine whether GW would be interested in considering Parker for admission to the University.

The University also stated that in mid-July, when all the necessary data became available, a formal

process to actually consider him for admission would have started and likely been completed by early August.

"Unfortunately, NCAA regulations and GW's tradition of confidentiality to applicants precluded the University from commenting publicly on this process or its plans," said GW's statement. "The University was further inhibited from fully informing and consulting even members of the GW family who asked questions about Mr. Parker's candidacy. This contributed to unbalanced publicity which made it impossible for the University to complete the normal

(See UNIVERSITY, p. 7)

Area media criticizes GW's Parker decision

BY JIM GERAGHTY
SPORTS EDITOR

GW's aborted recruitment of high school basketball star and convicted felon Richie Parker prompted an avalanche of media scrutiny over the controversial decision, much of it overwhelmingly negative.

University officials cited "unbalanced publicity" as one of the factors "which made it impossible for the University to complete the normal review of Mr. Parker in an objective manner."

"The media was way ahead of the decision curve," Vice President for Student and Academic Support

(See GW, p. 2)

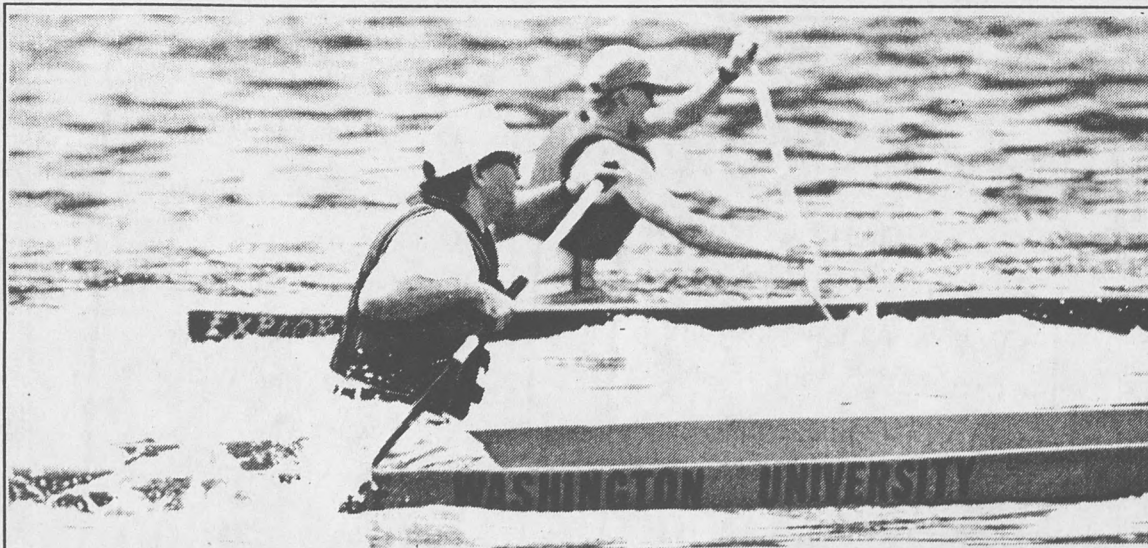


photo by Dave Flintzen

Alex Rosenheim paddles GW's concrete boat through the Potomac's waters during the National Concrete Canoe competition July 1.

THE SOLAR CAR LANDS
IN FOURTH PLACE.

NEWS, P. 2

CAMPUS REACTION TO
RICHIE PARKER.

OPINIONS, P. 4

R.E.M. PLUGS IN AND
TURNS IT UP ON SUMMER
TOUR.

IMPRESSIONS, P. 6

FURTHER COVERAGE OF
THE RICHIE PARKER
CONTROVERSY.

SPORTS, P. 7

Solar car finishes fourth in Sunrayce

GW's solar car finished fourth in a field of 38 entries from universities across the nation in Sunrayce '95, a 1,180-mile, 10-day race from Indiana to Colorado.

The race, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy, started in Indianapolis June 20 and concluded June 29 in Golden, Colo. GW finished behind cars from

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the University of Minnesota and California Polytechnic Institute-Pomona.

GW's car, which started in 28th place, moved up to second place after winning the fifth and sixth stages of the race but dropped to its final finish of fourth after the eighth and final stage.

A team of more than 30 GW engineering students built the car, which they christened simply "GW," to improve on their first car, "Sunforce I." That car finished fourth at Sunrayce '93 and ninth at the 1993 World Solar Challenge in Australia.

-Donna Brutkoski

GW says media was quick to judge Parker recruitment

(from p. 1)

Services Robert Chernak said last week. "Parker never got to the point of the University considering his application for admission."

One of the first writers to address GW's handling of the Parker case was Washington Post columnist Tony Kornheiser, who accused the University administration of being "so obsessed with growing itself into a basketball power that it lost all sense of taste and decorum."

"George Washington University should be thoroughly embarrassed by the noxious sideshow the recruitment of Richie Parker has become," wrote Kornheiser. "GW's transparent strategy is an insult to the intelligence of each student on campus, and to all of us who see it for the sham that it is."

Washington Times sportswriter Tom Knott criticized GW in several recent columns. In the June 26 edition, Knott wrote, "You can't pretend to be a quality institution but then go trolling for riffraff. You can't pretend to have standards, even high standards, but then ignore them when it suits the needs of your basketball program. The hypocrisy is self-evident. Here, though, is what George Washington officials should be asking: How would they feel if it were their daughter?"

Washington Times news commentator Adrienne T. Washington concurred. "The inclination is to chastise George Washington for making these curious offers while other schools rescinded theirs after Parker pleaded guilty," she wrote. "And if they think anyone believes that their generous offer to this victim was a random act of kindness, then I've got an 'urban jewel' in the nation's capital to sell them."

The administration has been harshly criticized in some circles for considering a convicted felon for admission to an institution of learning, leaving some to question where

GW draws the line. Washington Times cartoonist Peter Steiner drew a criminal in a prison with a basketball in his hands, saying, "I was going to get a scholarship from George Washington University, but my victim died."

The criticism has not been limited to newspapers in the District. The New York Daily News commented in a house editorial, "Unlike its namesake, it seems the George Washington University can tell a lie."

One of the few columnists to come out in support of the University's decisions appeared on the Washington Post's opinion page. Syndicated columnist William Raspberry wrote, "Don't the rest of us believe in second chances? George Washington isn't due any special commendation for considering Parker after two or three other schools had turned him down. But neither has the University earned the beating it's likely to take for not walking away from Parker - for refusing, in effect, to add to the sentence the court handed down."

"The whole story was sensationalized," said Chernak, pointing out that several newspapers in New York were "extraordinarily eager to cover this story."

"I'm not saying the media wasn't fair, but the circumstances didn't allow us to get enough information out there. Most of the principles involved weren't able to be evoked such as fairness. This was very passive recruiting, consisting of one exploratory visit. The term 'recruiting' was exploited."

The intense media coverage appears to have subsided, although the University's decision to end its interest in Parker grabbed headlines across the nation, and ESPN is producing a news segment on the controversy surrounding Richie Parker and the campus reaction.

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THE ELLIOTT SCHOOL
OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Student engineers row their concrete down the Potomac

BY JIM GERAGHTY
HATCHET STAFF WRITER

How do you get concrete to float?

That is the question engineering students at GW and 22 other schools contemplated while preparing their entries for the 1995 National Concrete Canoe competition July 1.

The event, sponsored by Master Builder Inc. to promote civil engineering, was hosted by GW this year, and the canoes not only floated but cruised across the waters of the Potomac River. At stake was \$9,000 in scholarship funds donated by Master Builder.

GW's entry, "The President," was built by the GW branch of the American Society of Civil Engineers. The canoe team consists of only a dozen people, headed by incoming president Erica Eva Carr, and this is only its second year in this competition. GW was clearly the underdog in this tournament compared to other schools, which have as many as 125 team members.

Daniel Betts, an engineering major, explained his participation in the "near impossible project" as "mainly for training as engineers."

In addition to the race, all of the teams made a presentation and display on the University Yard the day before the race. There, GW got its first look at the national competition, including the Tufts University "Tub," Cleveland State's "Rigid Member" and California State University-Sacramento's "Konkrete Kahuna."

No canoe traveled farther for the competition than the University of Hawaii at Manoa's "Kialoa."

The canoe was traditionally blessed for protection back in Hawaii, explained UH-Manoa paddler Tim Tucker. Two women from the Hawaiian Civic Club said a prayer in Hawaiian, and placed leis on the canoe. Tucker also said his team was probably the only team to surf with their canoe.

GW finished nearly last in most of the races on the Potomac.

"We're keeping up and gaining experience," said Carr. "We're learning how to paddle faster, more efficiently. We're also operating on only five hours sleep in the past two days, so we're pretty exhausted."

Other teams, however, suffered much worse fates than GW. Both Clemson University's boat and the University of Kansas' "Odyssey" tipped over during the race. Crew members fell out, then dog-paddled, pushing their canoe across the finish line. The "Odyssey" nearly tore in half and was no longer seaworthy after that race, with a sagging middle and large gashes in several places.

Although "The President" had a disappointing finish, most team members were not discouraged.

"It's an honor to be competing against the best in the country. It's a big event for GW and it promotes the school as a national-level engineering school, like the solar car," Betts said.

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An Independent Student Newspaper

Can we talk?

When the University administration reluctantly announced it was aborting its recruitment of Richie Parker, it pointed the finger squarely at the media, blaming "unbalanced publicity."

It claimed there were "extenuating circumstances" to the case that it could not talk about. True, the administration was effectively handcuffed by NCAA regulations which bar GW from publicly commenting on Parker until he signed a letter of intent to enroll. In such a case, any reporting on the subject could not be balanced, making GW a sitting duck in the face of criticism because it could not tell its side of the story.

But now that this criticism has forced GW to abandon its plans to sign the basketball star, the administration is free to comment. In fact, it had pledged to do just that. But now that President Stephen Joel Trachtenberg has lost his battle to give Parker a second chance – and with it, his lofty intentions to hold a public debate involving the whole of the University community – it appears that the point of any debate would be moot, that it is time to move on.

Before that happens, however, the administration must admit that the University's reputation has been tarnished, however temporarily, and take steps to win back the community's faith.

So let's continue the debate. If the extenuating circumstances are truly legitimate ones, the GW community deserves to hear them in order to decide whether it judged Parker and the administration too quickly. Most importantly, it could help foster a higher level of communication between students, faculty and the administration. Everyone at GW has legitimate opinions and concerns about big-time collegiate athletics and the University's reputation. We deserve a chance to hold a dialogue about those concerns.

Cup Check

It used to be teachers, coaches and other school staff members who were charged with the responsibility of helping parents to guide students through their high school years. This meant that in addition to teaching students, they could act as mentors to lead adolescents through an often difficult time.

But with a June 26 Supreme Court ruling allowing an Oregon school district to force junior high school athletes to undergo monitored drug tests, that crucial responsibility has been taken away. The 6-3 decision sets the dangerous precedent that an enforced test, not concerned people, is a more effective method of keeping kids out of harm's way.

The case was brought before the court after parents in Vernonia, Ore., noticed an influx in drug usage among teenagers and that athletes appeared to be the brazen leaders of the activity. But rather than test or punish only those suspected of drug use – or attempt to increase drug abuse awareness among all students – the court ruled to subject all athletes to, as dissenting Justice Sandra Day O'Connor put it, "intrusive bodily harm." It doesn't seem to matter that, as O'Connor wrote in the dissenting opinion, "an overwhelming majority (of student athletes) have given school officials no reason whatsoever to suspect that they use drugs."

Drug use among adolescents is, of course, a matter of enormous concern. But so is the Fourth Amendment. And rather than take up the task of dealing with troubled students person-to-person, the government, out of fear and paranoia, has taken the responsibility from those willing to do it.

The GW HATCHET

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GW's public relations debacle perturbs proud Colorado parent

Usually, I am proud to say my son attends George Washington University. However, the University administration has recently made some questionable decisions which have landed the school in the news for reasons other than the fact that it is a good school in an interesting, exciting city.

Even after the graduation debacle, after which President Stephen Joel Trachtenberg managed to make it sound more shameful than it already was to the newspapers and television cameras, the University didn't seem to learn much about averting public relations disasters.

My confidence in GW was further undermined when I opened our local newspaper here in Durango, Colo., and saw a story about GW headlined "Assault victim offered scholarship; university hopes to recruit attacker." That may make it sound like a regrettable coincidence, but it actually made clear just how far the arrogant University administration will go to not only bolster

its all-important basketball program but to also buy off both the public and the victim to keep quiet.

Luckily for the administration, this scandal took place over the summer, when many students are gone and potential protests are likely to be the quietest. Maybe they hoped to get him signed and on campus before the fall semester started and it was too late for anything to be

Reece
Kelly

done to prevent his attendance.

As if the recruitment of a convicted criminal was not bad enough, the Associated Press article quoted Bob Chernak saying the scholarship offer to Parker's victim was not related in any way to Parker's recruitment or the bad press it was attracting. How dumb does he think we are? It would take more than a weak public relations smear like that to hide the fact that no univer-

sity would just come out of the gate to offer what amounts to a full scholarship to a high school junior even if she was her junior-high class valedictorian. It would not surprise me if the University rescinded the offer now that Parker's has been aborted.

GW would have had no hope of successfully wooing Parker if high-caliber ballplayer had become a convicted felon. He likely would have gone to a basketball powerhouse like Seton Hall University, which withdrew its scholarship offer after the controversy and after protests from student groups on that campus. Why would GW have to risk its good name and that of its graduates by opportunistically scooping Parker from the discarded pile? And how or why did the University ignore the protests and negative publicity that forced other schools to abandon their interests

—Reece Kelly is a professor of German history at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colo.

WIN, PSU members are reassured but not by GW administration

Richie Parker won't be coming to GW. University administrators blame "unbalanced" media for this. They blame "hubris." But they refuse to blame themselves.

Throughout Parker's recruitment process, administrators like Bob Chernak and Stephen Joel Trachtenberg hid themselves behind NCAA rules, alluding to "facts" the public did not know about, insinuating that the media, as well as the hundreds of outraged students and parents who opposed their pursuit of Parker, had a distorted picture of what the facts were.

Here are the only facts that are important: Richard Parker and a friend forced a woman to perform oral sex on them. Parker pled guilty to felony sexual assault and was convicted. By recruiting Parker, GW offended hundreds of members of its community, who recognized the message they were being sent: sexual assault isn't an important issue.

When students, parents, faculty, alumni and other members of the University community voiced their opinions on the matter, the administration acted offended, as if they

resented the decision being made by the whole of the "GW family." It is painfully clear from the last few months of the President Trachtenberg and the administration consider the opinions of their "family" members second to their own, if at all.

GW recruited Richard Parker without ever acknowledging the issues that the action raised. Even now that it is over, Trachtenberg refuses to take responsibility or to apologize. It is reassuring, however, that the media and University students, parents, faculty, alumni and staff recognize the threat of sexual violence on college campuses and the University's role in prevention. Perhaps it's time the administration learned a lesson from us.

Jimmy Askew, Erica Bacich, Beth Buhot, Naomi Friedman, Roshan Kalantar, Rachel Lamanga, Shannon Latimer, Siobhan McGrath, Mary Schoen, Tim Shey are writing on behalf of Win Issues Now and the Progressive Student Union

GW banished Parker before it knew the facts

It was with dismay that I watched the media, alumni, students and fellow faculty rush to judgment over the George Washington University's stated desire to recruit Richie Parker.

The reaching of conclusions by the press prior to the presentation of all the facts has become all too common, but surely all sports writers know that the University could not publicly discuss the recruiting of any athlete prior to final clearance from the NCAA. And it is not unreasonable to think that other columnists communicate with the sports writers on their papers.

Did those who passed judgment make the effort to ask Mr. Parker's teachers what kind of recommendations they gave him? Did they ask the judge why he granted Mr. Parker probation rather than jail?

Arthur D.
Kirsch

Did they really think that President Stephen Joel Trachtenberg would permit the final admission of Mr. Parker without consultation with alumni, faculty, stu-

dents (male and female, athlete and non-athlete) and knowledgeable members of the local, as well as University, community?

Regardless of what the final decision on Mr. Parker's admission might have been, it is a shame that his case was decided in the media prior to the release of full information. And it is especially distressing that the University community supposedly dedicated to rational discourse, joined in the premature closing of the mind.

Arthur D. Kirsch is a 1955 GW graduate and a Professor of Statistics and Psychology

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Students, parents raise questions about Parker

BY JIM GERAGHTY
HATCHET STAFF WRITER

GW's recruitment of Richie Parker raised questions that concerned some incoming freshmen and their parents visiting GW for Colonial Inauguration.

GW's Vice President for Student and Academic Support Services Robert Chernak met with a group of incoming students and their families at the third Colonial Inauguration session June 22 in the Dorothy Betts Marvin Theatre. He attempted to explain what he could about GW's recruitment of both the Manhattan Central high school basketball star and his victim.

Many of the parents had no knowledge of the situation, or had only heard about it a short time earlier when they encountered a petition circulated by Wimmin's Issues Now and the Progressive Student Union.

"The University has a problem," Chernak explained. "We would like to say more, to explain to incoming students and parents what could possibly be the rationale for this decision. Unfortunately, our hands are tied ... We have a NCAA rule that says we are in no way able to comment publicly until a letter of intent has been signed."

However, some parents felt they had more questions after talking with Chernak than before.

One disgruntled mother from Baltimore, proudly wearing her "GW MOM" button, wondered why her daughter was unable to receive both a Presidential Scholarship and an art department scholarship, while the University found funds for

both Parker and his victim.

"I don't care how good a basketball player he is. Why does he get a full scholarship and not my daughter?" the mother asked, requesting not to be identified.

"She can't throw a 30-foot three pointer and grab offensive rebounds," her husband answered. "Sports certainly has value, but the University has bent all the rules beyond belief. I'm shocked that a school of this prestige would do this."

"Where is he living? If you tell me Thurston, I'm killing myself," said a concerned mother of a freshman girl from New York, also requesting not to be identified.

However, not all parents were so concerned. One mother from Florida felt there was nothing wrong with Parker coming to GW, provided he had the proper guidance.

"I wouldn't be worried about my daughter. I'm sure the University has taken appropriate safeguards," she said.

After the University decided not to recruit Parker, Chernak said he felt most parents had been understanding of the situation. "A lot of parents I met had been following the story in either local papers or newspapers in New York," he said later in an interview from his office.

"Most of them were reasonable and wanted to know more, or didn't understand why the University was doing this. Unfortunately, I wasn't at liberty to comment," Chernak went on. "But I was able to communicate (that) Parker hasn't been admitted, nor had he been awarded a scholarship, nor was he currently a member of the GW community."

Students on waiting list placed in rooms

Nearly 250 sophomores who were left without rooms after March's housing lottery have all been placed, said Paul Barkett, assistant director of Office of Residential Life.

ORL placed the last students in early June, when it sent out housing leases for the 1995-96 academic year, Barkett said.

He said ORL had placed all but 100 sophomores on the housing waiting list in rooms by the middle of May, when students left GW for the summer.

Barkett said the last 20 to 25 students on the list were placed in Mitchell Hall, but that almost "every-one else got one of their choices."

Barkett said the smaller size of the freshman class coming to GW in the fall may ease the housing crunch in the coming years. However, he said that would depend on the "return rate" of upperclassmen to the residence halls.

-Donna Brutkoski

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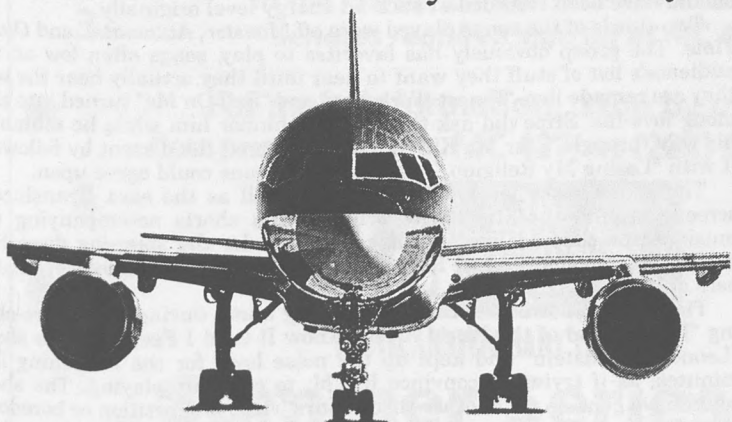


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impressions



This trio probably would have gotten lost on its way to the mang

Thou shalt laugh

BY JARED SHER
HATCHET STAFF WRITER

The Reduced Shakespeare Company has taken some daunting roles in its history, but none more so than "The Bible: The Complete Word of God (Abridged)," now playing at the Kennedy Center.

In trying to recap the epic saga of God and Man in under two hours the three spirited actors, Reed Martin, Matt Croke and Austin Tichenor take the audience on a rapid roller coaster ride through biblical history. Everyone already knows the story, though. To compensate for the predictability, the company mixes comedy and music with the finer points of religion.

On the sprint, the three cover the Old Testament in the fullest detail. The first act is about Genesis, which Tichenor points out was actually written by Peter Gabriel.

The show is replete with local and current references. Suffering in the Bible is equated with the recent struggles of the Redskins and Orioles. The Ten Commandments are compared to the Contract With America. When asked why he should be portraying God, one actor answered, "Because I play all the women."

Perhaps the funniest moments come not from the actors themselves but rather from the audience. For the Noah's Ark scene, the cast recruited 12 audience members to play the animals. Equipped with funny noises they oblige the actors with animal noises.

But ultimately, it gets bogged down with old jokes and forced political humor. Even the portrayal of the miracles of Jesus Christ degenerate into a cheesy magic show. Not exactly thrilling stuff for the self-proclaimed "greatest story ever accepted as fact."

The Reduced Shakespeare Company's "The Bible: The Complete Word of God (Abridged)" continues at the Terrace Theater of the Kennedy Center through August 20.

One Monsterous show

BY KAREN D. ANCILLAI
ARTS EDITOR

Many bands today rely on guitar solos and pyrotechnics to impress live audiences. Sheer volume and laser light shows, however, do not compensate for a group that does not have the energy or talent to play a live show.

R.E.M. is not such a group.

R.E.M.'s June 22 performance at New York's Madison Square Garden was an example for all the music world to follow. It's as if Michael Stipe, Bill Berry, Mike Mills and Peter Buck spent the five years after the exhausting 1989 *Green* tour in a lab perfecting the art of touring.

The show began with an explosion of light and sound as Buck grinded out the opening riff to "What's the Frequency, Kenneth?" offstage. The audience screamed, the flares exploded and the boys of R.E.M. charged onstage with a level of excitement matched only by school kids at recess.

Like their latest release, *Monster*, R.E.M.'s show plays incredibly loud. Quieter songs, like those off *Automatic For the People*, get electrified makeovers with raving results. Normally mellow or even bland songs like "Drive" and "Man On the Moon" come to life in the live setting. The show should have been recorded at such an energy level originally.

Two-thirds of the songs played were off *Monster*, *Automatic* and *Out of Time*. The group obviously has favorites to play, songs often low on the audience's list of stuff they want to hear until they actually hear the way they are remade live. "Finest Worksong" and "Fall On Me" turned into sing-along love-ins. Stipe did ask the crowd to humor him while he mumbled his way through "Star Me Kitten," but countered the dissent by following it with "Losing My Religion," something everyone could agree upon.

The show was a feast for the eyes as well as the ears. Translucent screens around the stage bore original film shorts accompanying the music. Stipe cheesed like a lounge singer under the spinning disco ball during "Tongue." Mills and Buck strutted and leapt like they were members of Van Halen.

The crowd followed the cue of the fading music during the encore-closing "It's the End of the World As We Know It (and I Feel Fine)" to shout "Leonard Bernstein" and kept up the noise level for the remaining few minutes, as if trying to convince R.E.M. to continue playing. The show could have gone on for another three hours without repetition or boredom. It ended then, though, and for anyone who wanted to hear more they would just have to find another opportunity to see them play.

The line forms behind me.

R.E.M. plays USAir Arena in Landover, Md., on October 17 with Grant Lee Buffalo. Obstructed view seats are still available.

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GW turns away Parker

(from p. 1)

review of Mr. Parker in an objective manner."

GW's involvement with Parker became public knowledge shortly after a visit he made to campus in May. Before Parker's visit, GW administrators had formulated the judgment that, in fairness, he should at least be allowed to state his case, Chernak said.

During that visit, Parker met a number of GW administrators including Jarvis, Chernak, Athletic Director Jack Kvanetz and President Stephen Joel Trachtenberg.

A committee of 12

Because of the public scrutiny, GW administrators determined that if the University continued its interest in Parker, a special committee would have been formed to consider Parker's fitness to become a member of the GW community.

According to Chernak, the committee was to have 12 members, including a Virginia circuit court of appeals judge, a high ranking law-enforcement officer, a member of the Board of Trustees, Student Association President Mark Reynolds and at least one more student (possibly a female athlete), a member of the Faculty Senate, a faculty member from another University, a psychiatrist, a GW administrator and members of the community.

Trachtenberg, Chernak, Jarvis and Executive Director of Enrollment Management Fred Siegel all agreed to give Parker's application due process and to yield to the judgment of community commitment.

In a statement, Trachtenberg said the committee would have "interviewed him, reviewed his academic credentials, and considered his specific crime. They would have measured him, his contrition, his attitude toward women and the risk of his presence."

"I think it would have been a shining example. The committee was to give a decision based on firsthand knowledge of the facts," Chernak said.



Robert Chernak

"We agree that whatever Richie Parker did, the only people who will know the truth were the three people there..."

-GW Vice President
Robert Chernak

The search for information

GW also sent University staff to New York City to interview more than 100 people associated with Parker, including his defense attorney, the victim's attorney, coaches, clergy, principals, friends and neighbors.

"We agree that whatever Richie Parker did, the only people who know the truth were the three people there," Chernak said. "This was clearly an aberration in Richie Parker's life, according even to the victim's attorney and all the people who know him. Let's not prejudge this. If there was at least one person who had said something inconsistent, that might be enough to discourage our interest."

Throughout the investigation and controversy, however, the University was unable to comment because of NCAA regulations. Chernak said he contacted the NCAA and asked for exemption several times and explained GW's difficult situation.

"The rule wasn't intended for this situation," Chernak said. "The rule was designed to prevent one school from getting an advantage over another school while recruiting a player. There was no other school recruiting Parker."

The final decision

GW administrators decided that the proper course of action was to allow Parker's recruitment to be in the public eye. "We thought that it would be an open process, nothing secretive," Chernak said.

But Parker never got to the point where the University was considering his application for admission, he added. By June 29, pressure from both within and outside the University had grown to enormous proportions, and the Board of Trustees had scheduled a meeting for that week.

"There was never a board meeting as such," Chernak said. "There was an informal discussion between the members of the Board of Trustees. President Trachtenberg came to the decision because of a combination of factors, including public sentiment both internal and external."

John Zeglis, the incoming chairman of GW's Board of Trustees, told the New York Post, "None of us like to have our institution up in lights and having people say, 'What do they stand for, anyway?' It caused us to bring our thought process along. I'm glad it's over."

Trachtenberg and Zeglis did not return calls to The GW Hatchet.

"In retrospect, you're trying to resolve an issue where a lot of symbolism enters the conversation ... including a conflict between morals and objectivity, or at least objectivity appears to come in conflict with the best interest of the University," Chernak said.

"Unfortunately, the process was not allowed to run its course," Trachtenberg said in a written statement. "The question having now become much more than the admission of a single student, it is my judgment that the balance of factors and the best interests of the University weigh against continuing the admissions procedures. We sincerely hope that Mr. Parker receives another opportunity somewhere to prove himself."

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